

Report on the Expanded Learning Time Grant: Costs, Expenses and Recommendations for Sustainability

January 2015

Chapter 165 of the Acts of 2014, Line Item 7061-9412

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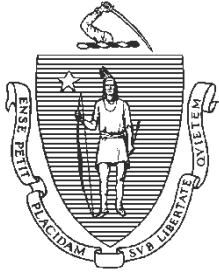
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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

January 2015

Dear Members of the General Court:

I am pleased to submit this Report to the Legislature on Expanded Learning Time Grants, pursuant to Chapter 165 of the Acts of 2014, line item 7061-9412:

"...provided further, that the department shall file a report with the clerks of the house and senate and the house and senate committees on ways and means, not later than January 30, 2015, outlining the cost and expenditures for schools in the initiative and make recommendations for sustainable and lower cost models for schools with expanded learning time..."

Since the inception of this grant program in FY06, expanded learning time (ELT) has become universally recognized for its ability to change the school day and year dramatically, allowing more time for diverse and supportive learning through core academics, enrichment, and enhanced professional culture. Additional time has been particularly important to economically challenged communities, both in district and charter public schools, allowing targeted deployment of supplemental educational and social-emotional resources to reach students most in need.

The Legislature's support of this grant initiative (MA ELT) has allowed an opportunity for 34 schools in 15 districts to redesign their calendars, adding at least 300 hours annually for all students. As the Legislature has recognized in the language of the line item itself, time alone is not sufficient to improve education. Rather, time must be targeted and retargeted to ensure that it is being used effectively to advance material and lasting improvement. Based on this precept, the Department has created standards for ELT in a document entitled Expectations for Implementation, which both guides ELT programming and serves as the yardstick for accountability for grant recipients. While not all schools have been equally successful in meeting their ELT goals, all have recognized the potential of additional time. In fact, all schools whose grants were terminated for failure to timely meet performance objectives were so convinced of ELT's potential that each subsequently fought for and was successful in keeping extra time supported by local resources.

The Department shares the Legislature's interest in identifying sustainable models for expanding time. Massachusetts supports a growing list of school models and programs that are using expanded time as a component, which presents an opportunity to review experiences from both design and fiscal perspectives. To that end, the Department has been working closely with the National Center on Time & Learning over the last eight months interviewing MA ELT stakeholders, reviewing data, and surveying grant experience in an attempt to identify best practices and address common challenges. We are pleased to include the highlights of this review here, as well as to provide recommendations for more sustainable ELT.

As this report concludes, a more stable and predictable source of funding for ELT could promote more sustainable practices, as well as enable expansion to a greater number of districts and schools in need. However, this report assumes that ELT will continue to be principally grant-funded until the Legislature invests more broadly in expanded learning time. Therefore these recommendations are made chiefly within the context of the existing grant structure, although many findings can be used to inform redesign decisions by both ELT and non-ELT schools and districts desiring long-term, sustainable programming.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to share our work on this important educational resource for college and career success after high school for all of the Commonwealth's students.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) respectfully submits this Report to the Legislature on Extended Learning Time Grants, pursuant to Chapter 165 of the Acts of 2014, Line Item 7061-9412:

“...provided further, that the department shall file a report with the clerks of the house and senate and the house and senate committees on ways and means, not later than January 30, 2015, outlining the cost and expenditures for schools in the initiative and make recommendations for sustainable and lower cost models for schools with expanded learning time...”

With the Legislature’s FY15 appropriation, the Commonwealth’s *School Redesign: Expanded Learning Time Initiative* (MA ELT) enters its tenth year. Since the first appropriation in the FY06 budget, over 22,000 students have had a chance to attend a MA ELT school, each of which adds approximately 30 percent more time to the school year than traditional district schools. Given that most students attend their ELT schools for multiple years, the grant has funded *millions* of additional hours of learning through core academics, a spectrum of enrichment opportunities, and customized intervention and acceleration. In addition, ELT has enabled many tens of thousands of hours of professional time for teachers for collaboration, professional development and planning to be embedded into the school day. In keeping with the grant’s preference for low-income districts, the schools that have received funding serve majority populations of high needs students (for example, in FY14, the percentage of low-income students in ELT schools ranged from 43 percent to 93 percent, with an average of 77 percent across all ELT schools, and an average of 16 percent English Language Learners).

MA ELT started in FY06 with a round of planning grants that enabled schools and districts to convene teams charged with redesigning school schedules in anticipation of implementing the following year. Initially, most prospective ELT schools that successfully completed the planning process were able to compete for implementation funding. In fact, the popularity of ELT and availability of planning grants resulted in the Department receiving proposals from 30 schools interested in implementing ELT in September 2009. However, because of insufficient funding, no new implementation grants were awarded for FY10, FY11, or FY12, and no planning grants have been awarded since FY10¹. In FY13, two new schools received implementation grants because funds were reallocated due to loss of funding by two schools for chronic underperformance.

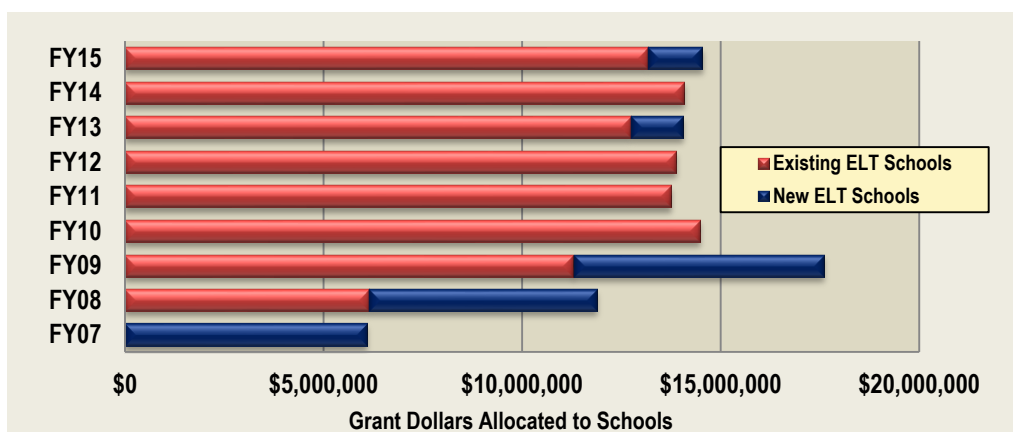
For this school year (2014-2015), the Department was able to add a cohort of four schools to the ELT roster, the most substantial increase since FY09, owing to: 1) the discontinued funding of

¹ While planning has not been funded for any new schools through MA ELT in recent years, the Department has partnered with the National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL) through the TIME Collaborative, which has awarded privately-funded planning grants in FY13 and FY14 to 14 schools, many of which have successfully competed for implementation funding through both MA ELT and federal ELT grants.

one underperforming ELT school (freeing funds for reallocation); 2) the appropriation of approximately \$400,000 in new funds by the Legislature; and 3) the creation of a grant priority for schools proposing high quality ELT designs for \$800 per pupil as opposed to the maximum allowable, \$1,300 per pupil, which has been awarded to past grant recipients.

Because of the significant additional cost of expanding school schedules, most district schools cannot add 300 hours to the school year without supplemental funding. However, because new funds must come from an increase in the line-item appropriation or the unfortunate circumstance of a school being defunded, the Department has been able to fund new MA ELT schools in only two of the last six years. Charts 1 & 2.

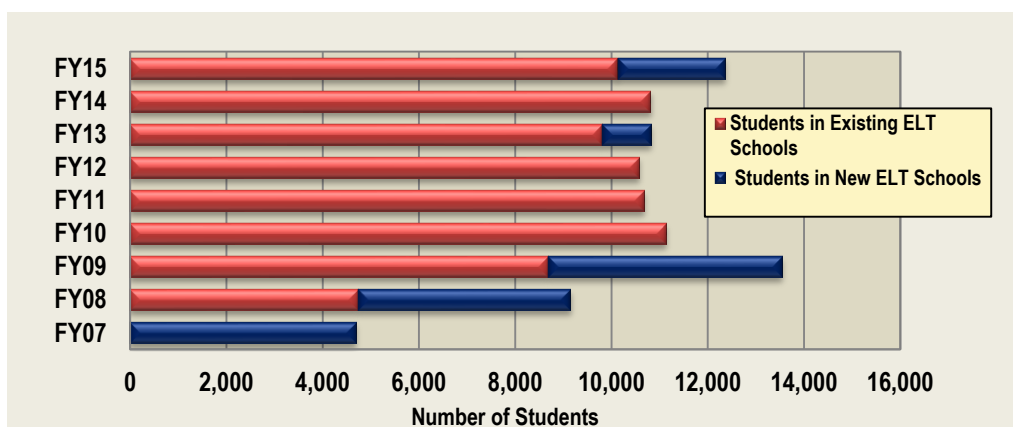
Chart 1: MA ELT: Grant Funding for New Versus Existing Schools By Year



Note: Funding has been awarded to new schools in only 2 of the last 6 grant years.

Source: Legislative reports and grant records..

Chart 2: Numbers of Students Attending New Versus Existing MA ELT Schools, By Year



Note: The numbers of students in new MA ELT schools in FY15 was relatively larger than in FY13, despite similar amount of “new” funding, due to the decrease in per pupil allotment for grant awardees in FY15.

Source: ESE grant documents.

Funding and Accountability Procedures

Administration of MA ELT reflects both by the annual legislative funding cycle and a longer term vision for each school. In sum, all applicant districts² compete for available grant funding through submission of grant application materials that include descriptions of redesigned school schedules for each prospective ELT school; an articulation of academic, enrichment and professional time goals; materials from districts in support of their ELT schools; and detailed budgets for the intended use of grant funds if the applicant is successful.

Successful grant applicants then work with the Department to create three-year performance agreements that establish measurable goals for the three key elements of ELT: academic performance, enrichment and professional development (a fourth goal, school culture, is optional). The academic goals are automatically set at a cumulative Progress and Performance Index (PPI) of 75 for all students as well as all subpopulations of students tracked by the Department. Cumulative PPI measures a group's progress toward meeting its proficiency goals and, when data is available, it represents a trend over four years. A cumulative PPI of 75 or more indicates that the group being measured is on track to meet its proficiency goals. The performance agreement is also informed by ELT Expectations for Implementation – eight standards for use and support of additional time for all key stakeholders (See Appendix A). Each school's performance agreement serves multiple purposes over the three-year term of the agreement: articulating priorities to all stakeholders, allowing schools and districts to self-monitor progress, and providing a standard for holding the school accountable for its performance over time and for decisions to continue funding.

Annually, each district that has received funding in the prior year must submit a noncompetitive reapplication in order to be eligible for the next year's grant funding, subject to legislative appropriation. The reapplication, while less strenuous than the original competitive grant application, requires the district to submit a proposed budget for each of its MA ELT schools, as well as self-evaluation of performance across program objectives for the preceding school year. Over time, the Department's support and accountability tools and practices have been refined to promote continuous reflection and improvement, rather than concentrating effort mainly at times of high-stakes decisions.

Prior to the expiration of its three-year performance agreement, each ELT school hosts the Department for a 1.5-day site visit, which is conducted pursuant to the Department's ELT site visit protocol (which can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/redesign/elt/>), also derived from the Expectations for Implementation discussed above. The Department assembles a site visit team of Department and peer reviewers who conduct focus groups of key stakeholders, classroom observations, and meetings with key school teams and committees to observe first-hand how well each school is using additional time to advance learning, culture and professional goals. The site visit culminates in initial findings provided orally, and then a written site visit report with key findings based on the evidence gathered in conjunction with the visit. The Department also schedules shorter, less formal check-in visits at its discretion, especially for

² Districts, rather than schools, apply for and are awarded ELT grant funding, although funding decisions are made on a school-by-school basis.

newly implementing schools and schools that are struggling with progress toward their performance goals.

Provided schools are making expected interim progress, funding decisions are generally reviewed on a three-year rotation, and renewals are based principally on academic achievement, performance agreement success, and site visits. Historically, most schools have been eligible for renewed funding. On occasion, however, a school's underperformance cannot justify continued funding, especially in light of the popularity and competitiveness of the grant. If the Commissioner determines that continued funding is not warranted, the defunded school generally continues through the school year in which the decision is made, in order to allow orderly transition to an alternative schedule or source of funding.

Sustainability

In the spring of 2014, Department staff with the help of the National Center on Time & Learning set out to investigate best fiscal practices and common challenges among ELT schools and districts and to engage stakeholder groups in a discussion about approaches to scalable, affordable, and well-designed ELT. This work has provided a wealth of information and thought about future funding for redesign of schools wishing to add substantial amounts of learning time to their schedules.

What follows are conclusions about high-level design, range of cost, and recommendations for more sustainable implementation of expanded learning time based on the lessons of those schools (30) and districts (13) that have participated in MA ELT since its inception in 2005 through school year 2014 (see Table 1, which includes SY2015 districts as well).³ Notably, in this report we accept and assume time will be used to good effect⁴ (especially given the evolution in technical assistance for planning and implementation available to ELT schools through partners NCTL and its affiliate Mass2020⁵). These recommendations result from a hard look at key programmatic elements contributing to cost (professional salaries, number of additional hours, teacher retention, planning, and partnerships) and the feasibility of optimal designs given finite resources.

³ As of School Year 2015, the total number of schools and districts that have participated in ELT rose to 34 and 15, respectively. However, because the new schools began implementation this fall, they were not included in the operational portions of this review.

⁴ This recommendation is not an assessment of the effect of ELT on student performance. As stated above, more time by itself will not guarantee success for students. However, more time, used wisely, has proved a catalyst for transformational learning, and has been documented in education literature. See, e.g., metadata analysis: Redd, Zakia, Christopher Boccanfuso, Karen Walker, Daniel Princiotta, Dylan Knewstubb, and Kristen Moore, K. 2012. "Expanded Time for Learning Both Inside and Outside the Classroom: A Review of the Evidence Base," *Child Trends*. Accessed December 29, 2014. http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Child_Trends-2012_08_16_RB_TimeForLearning.pdf In addition to published research, almost all MA ELT stakeholders spoke of ELT as a game-changing strategy for schools educating high numbers of high-needs students during our investigation.

⁵ Mass2020 and NCTL will be referred to collectively as NCTL from this point forward.

Table 1. Districts Participating in MA ELT, FY07 - FY15

District	Years of Participation
Boston	SY2007 – Present
Brockton	SY2013 – Present
Cambridge	SY2007 – Present
Chelsea	SY2009 – SY2014
Chicopee	SY2008 – SY2009
Fall River	SY2007 – Present
Fitchburg	SY2008 – Present
Framingham	SY2009
Greenfield	SY2008 – Present
Lawrence	SY2015 – Present
Malden	SY2007 – Present
Revere	SY2009 – Present
Salem	SY2015 – Present
Southbridge	SY2009
Worcester	SY2007 – Present

Source: MA ELT grant records.

Methodology

With the express intention of gathering evidence on sustainability and higher-order design for ELT, the Department along with NCTL engaged in a targeted listening campaign, conducting an array of focus groups and interviews with stakeholders including:

- MA ELT school leaders;
- MA ELT district leaders;
- MA ELT teachers;
- Massachusetts Association of School Committees (including school committee members from current and former MA ELT districts);
- School partners; and,
- Charter school leaders.

We also interviewed leadership from the Massachusetts Teachers' Association, AFTMass, and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and reviewed data and research. Finally, we spoke with members of the General court, including members of leadership and staff.

Supplementing the qualitative evidence from MA ELT grant recipients gathered over time and in conjunction with this investigation, the report relies on FY14⁶ data, disaggregated where possible to the school level, from the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning) Massachusetts survey, MA ELT grant budgets submitted annually for districts and schools, informal surveys conducted during our focus groups, MA ELT districts' collective bargaining agreements and related documents, and general school and district data reported to and compiled by the Department. We have indicated instances where assumptions are made or data is incomplete. Notably, sophisticated financial information disaggregated by school was not consistently available for ELT schools. However, the requirement from FY10 forward for MA ELT grant allocations to be uniformly tracked and reported at the school level has greatly aided our analysis of spending trends, albeit many districts supplement these grant funds with additional resources that are not reported as part of grant oversight.

Discussion

The ELT Grant Initiative Promotes a Long-Held Belief that Additional Time, Well Used, Can Accelerate Contraction of Achievement Gaps

Massachusetts has repeatedly acknowledged the power of additional time for learning, especially for economically disadvantaged students, through numerous Department-administered initiatives, including:

- Full-day kindergarten transition and quality grants;
- School turnaround programs;
- Innovation schools grants;
- Federal and state grant programs for ELT, as well as out-of-school time (summer and afterschool programming); and,
- Charter schools.

While MA ELT is marking its tenth anniversary, the notion that extending school schedules can drive significant improvement, especially for schools serving large numbers of low income students,⁷ dates back at least to the early 1990's in Massachusetts. At that time, circumstances and events converged to improve both access and quality of public elementary and secondary education, much of which was embodied in the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 (Act of June 18, 1993, No. 71; 1993 Mass. Acts 71, 159-239) (MERA). MERA added statewide testing (MCAS) and a statewide educational finance formula and aid program (Chapter 70), as well as other standards and institutional reorganizations, which were considered revolutionary at the time, but have since become the accepted and expected way we “do education” in the Commonwealth.

⁶ “FY” (fiscal year) and “SY” (school year) are used when discussing financial/budgetary and school-based topics, respectively. However, for purposes of this report, the time period is virtually coterminous.

⁷ See footnote 4.

One highly influential catalyst for MERA's finance reforms was a 1991 report of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE), "Every child a winner!: A proposal for a legislative action plan for systemic reform of Massachusetts' public primary and secondary education system." Every Child a Winner proffered a formula for funding that incorporated components of a quality public education for all students with "special attention to economically disadvantaged youth" (ECAW, ES-4) and a reasonable cost for each based on input from all levels of public education. Notably, among the suggested programmatic reforms was "extended school time," to be used for "teacher growth and renewal activities, increased learning time for students, and better integration of social services," targeted to "economically disadvantaged populations." (*Id.*, ES-5). While a legislative committee and early drafts of education reform bills retained ELT as a component of the foundation budget and/or a pilot program, the version of MERA that was signed into law reduced the allotment for ELT in the foundation budget (the "expanded program allotment" for low-income students), but retained a directive to the Board of Education (now the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education) to report back with legislative recommendations for an expanded school calendar (Act of June 18, 1993, No. 71, §80; 1993 Mass. Acts 71, 229).

In the fall of 1993 the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (Commissioner) appointed a Commission on Time and Learning (Commission) to carry out MERA's objectives for extended school time. The Commission worked over two years and produced two reports with recommendations – one a concrete regulatory proposal that is now embodied in 603 CMR 27.00, which sets minimums for "time on learning" at 990 hours for secondary students and 900 hours for elementary students.⁸ The second report of the Commission, "Unlocking the Power of Time," did not offer further specific regulatory recommendations, but made suggestions "to stimulate the rich public discussion which began in 1994 [with its first report] and which continues across Massachusetts today." (Unlocking the Power of Time, par. 4). This second report offered seven major reforms, including protecting core academic learning time from "disruptions or infringement," accommodating "differences in rates of student learning," sufficient professional collaborative and planning time, a 200-day school year (190 for students, 200 for teachers), restructuring the school calendar to allow optional year-round learning, creating community learning centers at 25 percent of schools, and promoting strong community-based partnerships for schools. (*Id.* at Executive Summary). The report appreciates the cost of expanding learning time, "[t]he Massachusetts Commission does not envision additional time on this scale without additional cost, even with creative planning and willing teachers. The Massachusetts Commission encourages the Board of Education to work closely with the Legislature and the Executive Branch to make this additional time a policy priority with incentive funding for schools to restructure and to increase structured learning time." (*Id.* at Chapter III).

⁸ The Commission's first report, "Time for Change," was presented to the Board of Education in 1994 and resulted in Board action in December of 1994 adopting learning time standards to be phased in over the ensuing two school years. Massachusetts Commission on Time and Learning, "Unlocking the Power of Time," *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*, 1995, accessed on December 29, 2014. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edreform/timelearn/tlrep.html#>

In FY06, ELT again came before the Legislature, this time in the budget as a line-item grant program with aspirations similar to the earlier ECAW report: awarding districts \$1,300 per student for 300 hours additional school time for all students attending their ELT schools. Echoing ECAW and many of the Commission on Time and Learning's recommendations, grant-funded ELT must include: "an appropriate mix of additional time spent on core academics, additional time spent on enrichment opportunities, such as small group tutoring, homework help, music, art, sports, physical activity, health and wellness programs, project-based experiential learning and additional time for teacher preparation or professional development." (Chapter 165 of the Acts of 2014, Line Item 7061-9412.) Preference for MA ELT "shall be given to districts with high poverty rates" or low academic achievement. (*Id.*) As discussed above, in partially fulfilling the vision of the MBAE of two decades earlier for additional time for learning, MA ELT has provided an excellent proving ground for sound, high-impact redesign of schools and their calendars, but has also demonstrated the obstacles to widespread, sustainable change through year-to-year grant funding.

What Does ELT Cost?

Asking how much ELT costs is a bit like asking how much good health costs – the inescapable answer is that "it depends." However, as with good health, certain advisable practices are on all lists, which is what we have strived to include here – good practices that incur the lowest possible costs long-term while establishing and maintaining successful and diverse ELT programming.

Since 2006, MA ELT funds schools at a maximum of \$1,300 per pupil.⁹ Perhaps an appropriate starting point in response to the "how much?" question is to measure the maximum grant award (\$1,300) against "regular-day" expenses. On average, districts across Massachusetts spent \$13,508 per student in school year 2013,¹⁰ a figure that represents **all** school operating expenditures, including those outside the general fund such as grants, private donations, and revolving accounts. Therefore, in exchange for receiving approximately 9.6 percent more funding, each ELT school provides 25 percent more time for learning through its ELT per-pupil allotment – not a bad return on investment. To appreciate the order of magnitude, at \$1,300 per pupil, the cost of providing ELT for all low-income students in grades 1 through 8 in the Commonwealth would be roughly \$293 million.

⁹ Although in the FY14 MA ELT grant competition, four district schools applied for and were awarded \$800 per pupil in response to the Department's competitive priority for ELT plans funded at this lower amount.

¹⁰ "FY13 expenditures per pupil," and accompanying explanation, *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*, accessed on November 21, 2014, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx13.html> Note that this figure already includes \$14.2 million in MA ELT grants awarded to Massachusetts schools in FY13, but spread over the Commonwealth's 980,000 students, which has an immaterial effect on the per-pupil average for this comparison. Also, the per-pupil average does not include charter school tuition, which is tracked separately. The average per pupil expenditure in FY13 for charter schools was \$12,604. "FY13 Charter School End of Year Financial Report Summary," *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*, accessed on November 21, 2014. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/finance/revexp/>

At the micro level, the Department has grant allocation data generated by participants in MA ELT, which, with the help of focus group input, has allowed a better understanding of ELT expense. However we need to be mindful that this data may be limited in several respects. First, the spending parameters for MA ELT schools were somewhat artificially set: *in capping the per-pupil grant allocation at \$1,300, the grant to some extent established what ELT costs for recipients*. Unsurprisingly, stakeholders accepted and often spent up to that amount. Because, as demonstrated below, most of the expense is allocated to teacher salaries, which were negotiated at the district level usually *after* grants were initially awarded, the grant “pot” may have influenced those negotiations and, therefore, the cost of ELT. In addition, many districts spend more for ELT than the grant amount, depending on their choices related to program delivery and the growth of costs associated with those choices over time. For example, O’Reilly and Kolbe reported that 9 of 15 ELT schools in FY10 spent appreciably more than \$1,300 per pupil on ELT programs, with the grant covering from 60-94 percent of total ELT costs.¹¹ These super-grant disbursements are not routinely reported to the Department as ELT expense.¹²

With these caveats, through a combination of data and anecdotal evidence, we have been able to discern patterns and tradeoffs among MA ELT schools that inform these recommendations and, we hope, will help to improve the value returned for dollars spent to expand learning time.

Key ELT Cost Drivers: Discussion and Recommendations

Teacher Compensation

In FY14, the bulk of MA ELT grant funds were dedicated to direct instructional staff (over 70 percent, *see* Chart 4), which has historically been the case.¹³ However, on a school-by-school basis, the allocation for instructional staff salaries varies substantially (Chart 5).¹⁴ From

¹¹ O’Reilly, Fran and Tammy Kolbe. 2011. “Where Does the Money Go? Expenditures for the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (MA ELT) Initiative,” p. 13. *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*. Accessed on January 2, 2015. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2011/12ELT-Expenditures.doc>

¹² In a few instances schools with high concentrations of students with disabilities have struggled to fully access ELT given that support for these students often requires resources well beyond grant funding. Given this experience, we are concerned that the flat per-pupil allotment may also have a chilling effect on which schools apply, i.e., the prohibitive additional cost may discourage schools with concentrations of high needs students from seeking ELT funding altogether, especially in districts at or near their net school spending requirements.

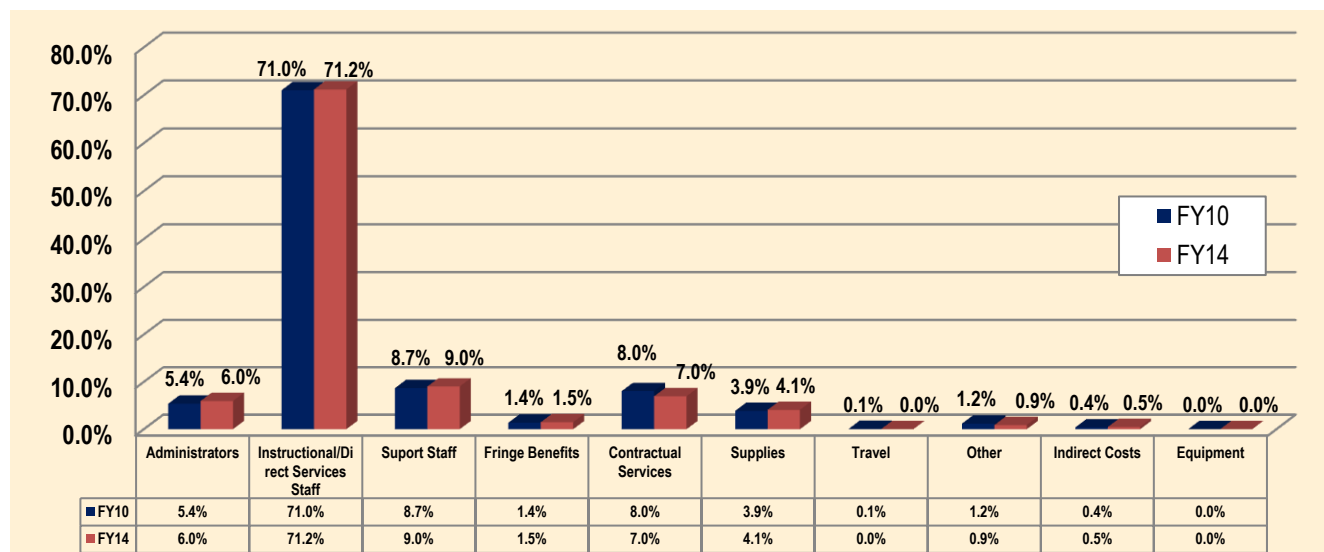
¹³ *Id.* O’Reilly and Kolbe found that “over three quarter of all spending for [Mass.] ELT (77 percent) went towards paying classroom and specialist teachers, paraprofessionals, contractors, substitutes, and community partners who provide instruction.” (p.7)).

¹⁴ A recent review of use of turnaround grant funds among Massachusetts schools also showed variation in costs for those Level 4 schools implementing expanded schedules, noting “some districts used substantially higher portions of SRG [school redesign grant] funds to cover extended time.” Lane, Brett, Chris Unger, and Phomdaen Souvanna. 2014. “Turnaround Practice in Action: A Practice Guide and Policy Analysis,” Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning (instll.com), accessed December 29, 2014. <http://www.instll.com/resources/2014practicesreport.pdf>

discussions with district and school leadership, teachers, and reviewing grant applications and collective bargaining documents, the main reasons for the variation seem to be:

- Differing terms of collective bargaining agreements governing compensation for additional time;
- The manner in which additional time is staffed;
- “Going rate” for teachers in the geographical area in which the ELT district is located, and;
- Years of creditable service of educators teaching in ELT schools.

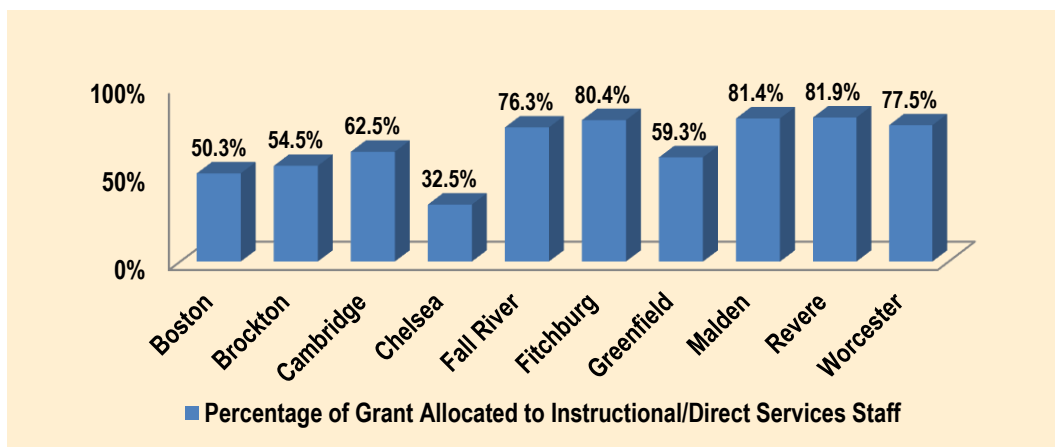
Chart 4: Grant Allocation, By Expense Category, for Districts Participating in MA ELT in FY14 Compared to FY10



Note: Brockton did not receive a MA ELT grant until FY13, so is not included in the FY10 data.

Source: Grant recipient budgets.

Chart 5: Variation in Percentage of Grant Funds Allocated to Instructional/Direct Services Staff Across FY14 ELT Districts



Source: Grant recipient budgets.

To better explain the variation, it is important to understand how most ELT teachers are paid. Almost all districts have negotiated ELT compensation as a pro rata share of each teacher's "regular day" salary, whether as a straight percentage or a proportion based on additional time worked (Table 2). Therefore, teacher salary expense is directly tied to an ELT teacher's location on the "regular-day" salary table, which in turn is a product of a teacher's creditable years of teaching and education level. Because ELT expense is largely determined by salary expense, an ELT school with 10 mid-career teachers will have higher expenses than an ELT school within the same district with 10 teachers early in their careers.

Table 2: FY14 ELT Compensation Formulas: Districts with MA ELT Grant

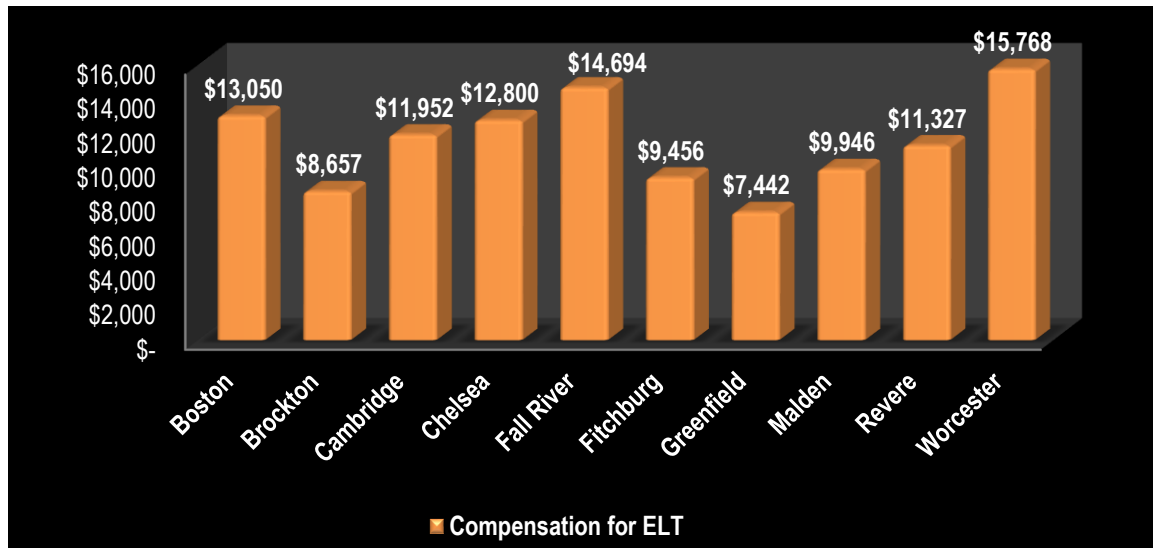
District	Compensation Formula
Boston	Flat contractual hourly rate, same for all teachers
Brockton	14.8% of salary
Cambridge	Stipend bands based on years of service (0-5 years; 6-10 years, 11+ years)
Chelsea	Stipend bands based on years of service (0-3 years, 4-7 years, 8+ years)
Fall River	30% of salary
Fitchburg	15.5% of salary
Greenfield	18% of salary
Malden	18% of salary
Revere	18% of salary
Worcester	26.3%-26.8% of salary (varies by number of additional minutes at ELT school)

Note: Compensation in this chart assumes a teacher's full participation in ELT hours.

Source: Collective bargaining agreements and related documents from grant recipient districts.

In addition, "regular day" salary tables can vary substantially among districts. As a result of underlying salary table differences and the varying proportions paid for working longer hours among districts, ELT salaries, and therefore overall ELT expense, fluctuate both across and within districts. To illustrate, Chart 6 sets out the additional compensation that a teacher with a master's degree and 5 creditable years of service would earn in each of the FY14 MA ELT districts for an additional 300 hours (note: in practice, not all teachers in all districts staff the entire ELT schedule). Notably, the relative cost of living does not explain the variation, which persists after application of a cost of living adjustment. (Chart 7).

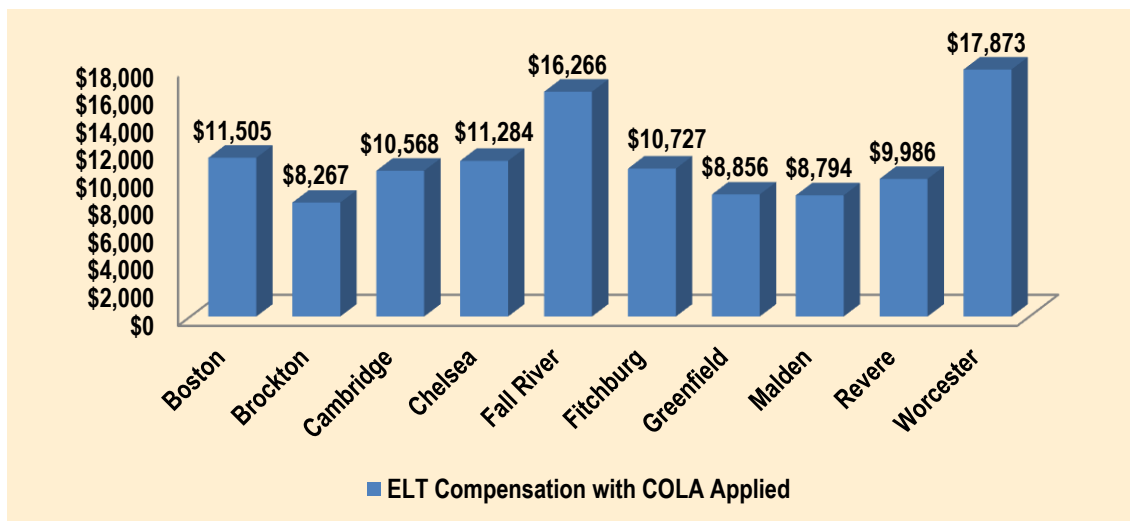
Chart 6: Comparison Among MA ELT Districts: ELT Salary Differential for Teacher with 5 Years Creditable Experience and Masters Degree in FY14



Note: Salary differential assumes teacher is working 300 hours of ELT. For Worcester, which figures ELT compensation per minute of additional time, this chart assumes that addition of 106 minutes per day over “traditional” school days.

Source: Calculation derived from collective bargaining agreements and related documents from grant recipient districts.

Chart 7: FY14 ELT Compensation Differential for Teacher with Masters and 5 Years of Experience Adjusted for Cost of Living



Note: See note to Chart 6. Cost of living for each district is calculated relative to the state average.

Source: Calculation derived from collective bargaining agreements and related documents from grant recipient districts. Cost of living adjustment derived from MIT Living Wage Calculator, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>

The few districts that have been able to negotiate a “flat rate” for compensating ELT teachers (i.e., all teachers are paid the same amount for ELT hours regardless of seniority or degree), such as a stipend, stipend bands (set amount based on time worked) or a contractual rate (flat rate per hour), are able to better predict salary expense for ELT schools from year to year.

Because of teacher mobility (attrition tends to be relatively high in ELT schools, see “Teachers” section, *infra*) and preferences for filling teaching vacancies based on teacher seniority (as opposed to unfettered choice by the principal), the composition of ELT teaching staff is often beyond the control and foresight of district or school leadership. If ELT teachers are paid a pro rata proportion of their step (seniority) and lane (education level) on a variable salary table, ELT budgets are often equally unpredictable. A flat-rate salary differential for ELT hours eliminates this issue. Further, on average, flat-rate districts have been able to keep annual salary cost from growing at the rate experienced by their variable-rate ELT counterparts (flat-rate ELT schools saw the greatest decreases in percentage of grant used for salary from FY10 to FY14 (average of 16.43 percentage-point decline¹⁵), whereas variable-rate ELT schools averaged a 2.48 percentage-point *increase* in allocation to salary in the same period).

A number of mature ELT districts, especially where staff retention rates are above average, are experiencing salary pressure given the static per-pupil allotment over the 7+ years of their participation in MA ELT. In particular, grant-strapped districts expressed frustration that they are no longer able to afford the range or depth of outside partnerships that characterized their offerings as early grant recipients, and many have sacrificed designated ELT coordinator positions, which had included managing partnerships among job responsibilities.

Additional factors contributing to unsustainable salary expense

- **Timing of grant.** Because the grant is subject to legislative appropriation and the total appropriation can vary from year to year, the number of new schools, if any, that will receive grant funding is highly uncertain. As a result, schools that have applied for grant funding are reluctant to pursue serious contract negotiations for ELT staff until funding is certain, which is often four to six weeks before school starts. In practice, this timing results in compensation agreements being finalized well into the school year, leaving little time or opportunity for creative bargaining. By numerous reports, efficacy in these circumstances often trumps sustainability.
- **Intractability of contract terms.** Once negotiated, compensation terms have proved resilient to meaningful revision, even when salaries are challenging a district’s ability to

¹⁵ This decrease includes a 31 percent drop in Chelsea’s allocation for direct instruction, resulting in part from contracting with an outside, “second-shift” partner for at least one grade. Even if Chelsea is removed from the mix, however, the other two flat-rate districts experienced an average 9 percentage-point decrease in grant allocation to salary.

sustain popular aspects of ELT.¹⁶ Thus, the negative effect of initially negotiating terms for ELT in haste, as described *supra*, can have long-term consequences. That said, one district successfully changed from pro rata to stipend-based compensation for FY15, but only for new teachers. As a result, the benefit of the change will not be fully realized until all of the ELT teaching staff has turned over, and has had the reported effect of creating a schism between teachers paid pursuant to the competing schemes. Another district negotiated differentiated stipends based on years of experience and education level for one year, but returned to a percentage of base salary (same as pre-stipend percentage) the following year.

- **Lack of immediate consequences for unsustainable terms.** While the grant application and reapplication encourage negotiation of sustainable contract terms, the grant neither expressly prescribes nor penalizes particular compensation arrangements. While an ELT school/district may be forced to terminate ELT programming, eventually, if resources (grant and otherwise) cannot meet ELT expense or programming suffers to the point of defunding, these distant possibilities may be insufficient motivation when the grant is new and contracts are being negotiated.
- **No regional cost adjustment.** The uniform per-pupil allotment does not reflect the differences in relative educational costs among districts.
- **No inflation adjustment.** The grant allocation has not been adjusted to reflect the declining purchasing power of \$1,300 over time.

The Lawrence Model for Time

We cannot leave the discussion about compensation and expanded learning time without citing recent changes involving the Lawrence Public Schools. Last year (school year 2014), Lawrence instituted an additional 205 hours of schooling at all of its non-high schools (1330 hours mandatory at all schools, compared to 1170 for most schools fulfilling regulatory instructional time requirements). The 1330-hour schedule is considered “regular day” in Lawrence and therefore does not warrant additional compensation. If schools add time, teachers are paid based on a stipend schedule, by the district, as follows: \$2,000 for 1400-1499 hours, \$3,000 for 1500-1599 hours, and \$4,000 for 1600-1825 hours. In FY14, three Lawrence schools won 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grants for ELT (a Department-administered federal grant) funded at an average of \$262 per pupil, and in FY15 another was awarded a 21st CCLC ELT grant at the maximum allocation of \$500 per pupil. Another Lawrence middle school received a MA ELT grant for FY15 in the amount of \$800 per pupil. By all accounts, the 21st CCLC ELT schools have been able to add enrichment using community-based partners, as well as curriculum and professional enhancements despite the relatively low per-pupil grant amounts, presumably owing in part to their pre-existing contract-set stipends, which comprise the lowest per-hour

¹⁶ In fact, one focus-group teacher expressed her belief that teachers had “shot themselves in the foot” by negotiating high salaries in the early days of the grant, given the cuts in programming they are now confronting.

compensation for ELT among MA ELT districts.¹⁷ That said, 21st CCLC ELT grants are awarded for three years (assuming compliance with grant terms) with the possibility of some continued funding on a limited basis. Thus, due to a more finite grant term, 21st CCLC ELT schools confront sustainability concerns from the outset, even if their core compensation structure results in relatively lower cost for their additional time.

Whether the Lawrence model is replicable in other ELT districts remains to be seen. As a Level 5 district, Lawrence's superintendent is a receiver statutorily appointed by the Commissioner, and therefore has authority to institute policies to promote the rapid turnaround of student achievement notwithstanding contract provisions. However, Lawrence teachers have now ratified a new collective bargaining agreement that includes a career-ladder model of compensation (rather than the traditional step-and-lane model described, *supra*), as well as a stipend schedule for additional time. The success of this compensation model as a component of district turnaround may provide incentive for other districts seeking dramatic improvement to follow suit, with corollary benefit for the sustainable expansion of learning time.¹⁸

Because compensation consumes the largest share of grant funds (as is true of school budgets generally), making changes to reduce this expense, even if small, presents the most fertile ground for more sustainable ELT programming. That said, the following recommendations, along with those made throughout the report, attempt to reflect sensitivity and fairness, recognizing that educators are the most important single contributor to student success.

¹⁷ Of the 11 schools that have received state and federal ELT grant awards at substantially less than \$1,300 per pupil (per the FY14/FY15 21stCCLC and FY15 MA ELT grant competitions), five are Lawrence schools, two are Boston schools with autonomous powers (including over staffing), and one is a level 5 school with receivership powers. Only 3 of the 11 reduced-amount grant recipients have the traditional step-and-lane salary tables for teacher compensation, reinforcing a conclusion that teacher salaries drive the cost of ELT and that more sustainable arrangements are possible.

¹⁸ As this report goes to press, Springfield has announced a contract arrangement with the Springfield Education Association covering Springfield's eight middle schools with striking similarities to the Lawrence contract with respect to compensation for longer school days. The majority of these middle schools are designated at Level 4 on the Commonwealth's accountability scale, which is one level away from potential state receivership. Springfield Education Association, "Collective Bargaining Agreement." Accessed on January 2, 2015. http://www.seateachers.com/HTMLobj-2331/Level4Tentative_AgreementNovember2014.pdf, and Carolyn Robbins, "Springfield's failing middles schools get help with Empowerment Zone," MassLive (blog), December 12, 2014 (4:31 p.m.), http://blog.masslive.com/breakingnews/print.html?entry=/2014/12/springfield_school_committee_o_2.html Additionally, Boston Public Schools announced an agreement, just ratified, whereby school days at elementary and middle schools will be lengthened by 40 minutes, and teachers will be compensated through a stipend of \$4,464 (approximately 20 percent less than the contractual hourly rate). See, e.g., Levenson, Eric. 2014. "Walsh, Boston Officials Agree to Add 40 Minutes to School Day." *Boston Globe*, December 26, 2014. Accessed December 29, 2014. <http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2014/12/26/walsh-boston-officials-agree-add-minutes-school-day/tTvvHkqDWNitS11jIGr1bI/story.html>

Issue: Collective Bargaining Terms for ELT Schools Often Result in Unpredictable and Unsustainable Salary Expense.

Goal: District contribution to ELT salary expense from grant outset.

Rationale: A required district financial commitment will ensure that the district is fully invested in sustainability from the outset of the grant instead of relying on the grant until it can no longer sustain cost increases as the program matures. In particular, with a district financial stake, incentives for negotiating creative and affordable compensation and staffing structures will be enhanced, especially at the outset of the grant, thereby reducing the likelihood that a “reset” conversation will be necessary in the future.

Options:

- **Meaningfully limit the percentage of the grant that can be used for direct instructional salaries**, perhaps starting at 50 percent (the range for FY14 was 33 percent to 82 percent; only two districts were at or below 50 percent).
- **Limit the percentage of the grant that can be used for direct instructional salaries by reference to relative district wealth** (i.e., the Department’s Digital Connections Partnership grant), ensuring that less wealthy districts are not priced out of ELT.
- A variation on the percentage limitation, above, would be to **require districts to contribute to ELT salary expense**, so that all districts would be required to fund some of the cost of teacher time (even if they use less than 50 percent of the grant for salaries). Again, the amount of district match could be varied by district wealth and/or salary arrangement (i.e., more sustainable arrangements require less matching funds) in order to promote equity and to provide incentives for durable compensation arrangements.
- Consider introducing an adjustment to the grant allocation that factors in cost of program delivery regionally.

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**Goal: Teacher salary expense for ELT should not vary based on staff composition or seniority.**

**Rationale:** When compensation for ELT teachers is a pro-rata share of their base salary, budgeting for ELT increases from year to year as the teaching staff matures or may vary significantly based on staff turnover, as turnover historically has been relatively high with many ELT schools. Teachers assume many functions in traditional district schools outside of regular activities and regular hours that are compensated through stipends. Especially given the substantial professional benefit that ELT traditionally allows, stipends for ELT are appropriate.

**Options:**

- **Establish stipends or stipend bands based on the number of hours above traditional school day that a teacher works.**
- **Establish a stipend for “teacher time”** (i.e., time when an educator is not actively teaching: planning, collaboration, coaching), while retaining a pro rata or hourly amount for additional classroom teaching time.
- **Require current MA ELT districts to adopt a fixed-rate compensation model for ELT staff within three years or at the expiration of their MOU, whichever is sooner.**

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Goal: Invest key stakeholders in making informed value decisions that include cost information at the planning stage for ELT.

Rationale: As part of the planning process, the best of which includes strong educator input and leadership, cost information should be used as one data point in redesigning schedules and programming. In this way, those who are planning will be able to make tradeoffs and value-driven decisions in a way that will invest all in responsibility for fiscal sustainability. In many cases, ELT planning is substantially completed before a school or district business person evaluates affordability, which may result in unnecessary revision and disinvest the planning team. Comments by teachers in a focus group indicated that they perceived “cuts” and negotiations happening to them, without their input. Unifying financial and programmatic planners/leaders as a team should result in a stronger plan from the outset and will perhaps build common understanding around compensation and program decisions throughout implementation.

Option:

- Assign the district business officer or a liaison to the school planning/implementation team for ELT, who can provide aggregated expense data as they make decisions about programs, enrichment, and professional time.

Hours

There are many good reasons to extend the school day to eight hours (approximate length of day to achieve MA ELT’s additional-300-hour-per-year requirement), not only for what it provides to students in increased learning opportunities, and educators in professional enhancements, but because doing so also provides a safe, structured day that coincides with many parents’ work schedules, avoiding unsupervised gaps in the day. However, as this report demonstrates, the cost of ELT is directly related to the amount of time that is added to a school’s schedule, largely because of salary expense. Citing salary pressures as well as teacher and student fatigue, many district and school leaders expressed a desire for relief from the 300-hour mandate, although none advocated for less than the equivalent of an additional hour per day (approximately 180 additional hours per year).

Expanded Professional Time. While the obvious solution to the expense/fatigue issues would be simply to reduce the number of hours in the ELT school day, there are intermediate solutions, such as providing 200 hours for students while retaining 300 hours for teachers. Doing so would accomplish cost-reduction (by relieving the need to provide programming for students during teacher time) and addresses student burnout, but preserves an important benefit of expanded schedules: more teacher time. Research has demonstrated that teacher effectiveness has a direct impact on student achievement, especially for low-income students, and suggests that a viable strategy to elevate student achievement is to improve teacher quality.¹⁹ A recent survey of strategies in successful Massachusetts turnaround schools (showing sufficient gains in student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps to allow them to exit Level 4), credited “intentional practices for classroom instruction” that included coaching, feedback, focused professional development and a collaborative professional culture, as well as use of data to refine and individualize learning as essential for accelerating student achievement.²⁰ To advance and sustain consistent levels of effective teaching at ELT schools, then, teacher schedules should retain enough room to develop teaching practices that have proved so effective in turnaround models.²¹

Targeted ELT. The corollary to reducing ELT hours for all students is reducing the number of students participating in the full ELT day. Given that districts are serving over 10,000 students in ELT schools, reducing that number by even a small percentage by targeting all or part of a school’s ELT time can substantially reduce costs. For example, using a middle school of 500 students:

Table 2: Hypothetical Variation in ELT Grant as a Result of Targeting Participation in ELT and/or Differing Amount of Time Added.

Number of Students with ELT	How Many ELT Hours Annually?	Grant Amount	Difference from Current Grant Award
500 (All)	300	\$650,000 (\$1,300 per pupil)	\$0
500 (All)	180	\$390,000 (\$780 per pupil)	-\$260,000
350 (Targeted)	300	\$455,000 (\$1,300 per pupil)	-\$195,000
350 (Targeted)	180	\$273,000 (\$780 per pupil)	-\$377,000

Note: The per-pupil allocation for 180 hours (\$780) is proportional to 300 hours at the full grant allocation of \$1,300 per pupil.

¹⁹ Nye, Barbara, Spyros Konstantopoulous, and Larry V. Hedges. 2004. “How large are teacher effects?,” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 237-257, cited by Kaplan, Claire, Roy Chan, David A. Farberman, and Ami Novoryta, “Time for Teachers: Leveraging Expanded Time to Strengthen Instruction and Empower Teachers.” *National Center on Time & Learning*, accessed November 21, 2014. http://issuu.com/nationalcenterontimelearning/docs/time_for_teachers_final_?e=3629693/7823612

²⁰ Lane, pp. 11-12.

²¹ Kaplan, p. 10, citing to a meta analysis demonstrating that students of teachers with 30 to 100 hours of professional development made gains in achievement totaling 21 percentiles more than peers taught by teachers without PD.

If 70 percent of the students at this hypothetical school received an extra hour of learning a day (versus 1.66 hours required to achieve 300 hours annually), sufficient funds could be reallocated (assuming the same overall ELT allocation by the Legislature) to allow an hour of ELT for an additional 685 students.

In keeping with the Department's belief that ELT should be a catalyst for innovation and redesign of "learning as usual," targeted ELT should be used thoughtfully to allow meaningful learning to happen, despite departure from 300 additional hours for all — for example, differentiating the amount of time by grade level in a K-8 school (lesser hours for younger students, more for older students) or creating a capstone or project-based learning year for 8th grade students across a district, or offering differentiated summer learning opportunities. In no event should ELT funding be used solely to add unstructured or unintegrated functions such as free homework periods at the end of the day or child care.

Issue: Targeting and Varying the Amount of Expanded Time May Allow More Students to be Served with Limited Resources.

Goal: Include options for schools to vary hours for students and professionals to best serve student success with limited resources.

Rationale: Currently, the statutory language for the grant requires that all students participate in all 300 ELT hours (with the exception of students with an IEP that determines longer days will not advance student goals). However, there may be variations on the amount of expanded time for a given school that would be substantial enough to catalyze desired achievement, but consume less in resources. Mindful that school culture may be more challenging in an environment where students are on differing schedules, differentiation is the hallmark of many ELT schools that have achieved admirable unity around their missions. Further, positive early results from Level 5 schools provide persuasive evidence that a school calendar of 1330 hours as a baseline can achieve rapid improvement among our most severely underperforming schools, if well designed.

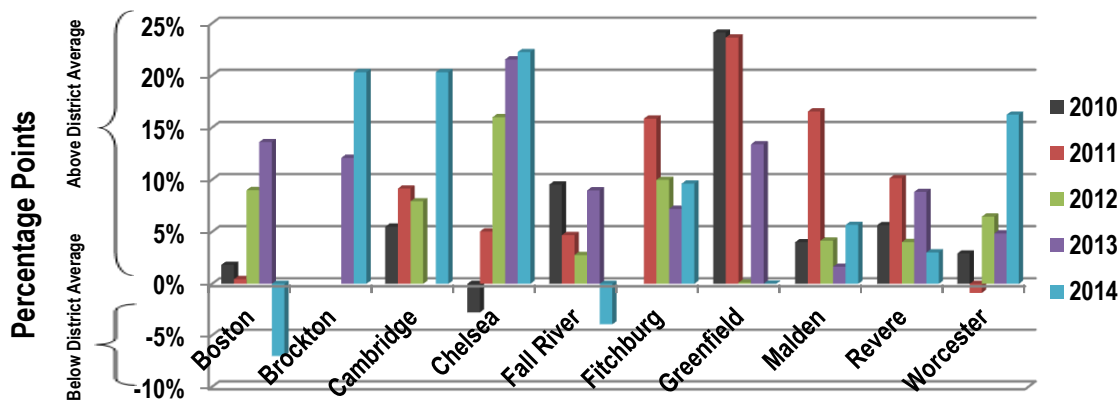
Options:

- Allow grant recipients to implement varied schedules for students based on academic need, but no less than a total of 1330 hours annually for all participating students (the equivalent of adding approximately 1 hour per day to a school that begins with a 6.5-hour day). The grant allocation will be pro-rated based on student hours.
- Provide incentives to maximizing additional teacher time for planning, collaboration, and preparation, including a longer professional day after students have been dismissed.

Teachers

Another potential tax on resources noted in our investigation is that teacher attrition at MA ELT schools tends to exceed rates at the other schools in their districts. When a school is redesigned to add 300 hours a year, losing some teachers is not surprising, especially when contracts often facilitate teachers opting out to a district school with more traditional hours. However, higher-than-district levels of turnover seem to persist over time.²² (Chart 8).

Chart 8: Difference in Teacher Turnover Rates at MA ELT Schools vs. Non-MA ELT Schools, By District: SY2010-SY2014



Note: Brockton did not participate in ELT for all five years. Fitchburg did participate in school year 2010, but through a school that subsequently merged, making segregated school data unavailable for that school for 2010. Cambridge reconfigured grades in ELT schools in 2013, creating an aberration in teacher turnover rates that year, so is omitted from this chart.

Source: ESE's District Analysis and Review Tools (DART) for schools and districts.

Because there is a cost to schools associated with turnover,²³ MA ELT districts and schools may be able to recapture resources to the extent cost-effective design and administrative changes may reduce the root causes of unwanted teacher turnover.²⁴

²² It should be noted that in some instances, while the MA ELT schools' rate of turnover exceeded the average of the other schools in the district, the MA ELT school rate itself was not high (i.e., for Malden in 2014, the turnover rate for MA ELT schools was 12 percent (below the state average of 15 percent) and for non-MA ELT schools was 7 percent).

²³ One study estimates the per-teacher cost to a school of losing a teacher to be \$8,400 for urban schools and \$3,600 for non-urban schools, comprising expenses for recruitment, hiring and training (not including central office expense or costs in student achievement). Teacher Turnover Cost Calculator, *National Commission on Teaching and America's Future*. Accessed on January 2, 2015. <http://nctaf.org/teacher-turnover-cost-calculator/>

²⁴ Ronfeldt, Matthew, Susanna Loeb and James Wyckoff, 2013. "How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement." *American Educational Research Journal* 50:4-36 (published online on October 23, 2012, doi: 10.3102/0002831212463813).

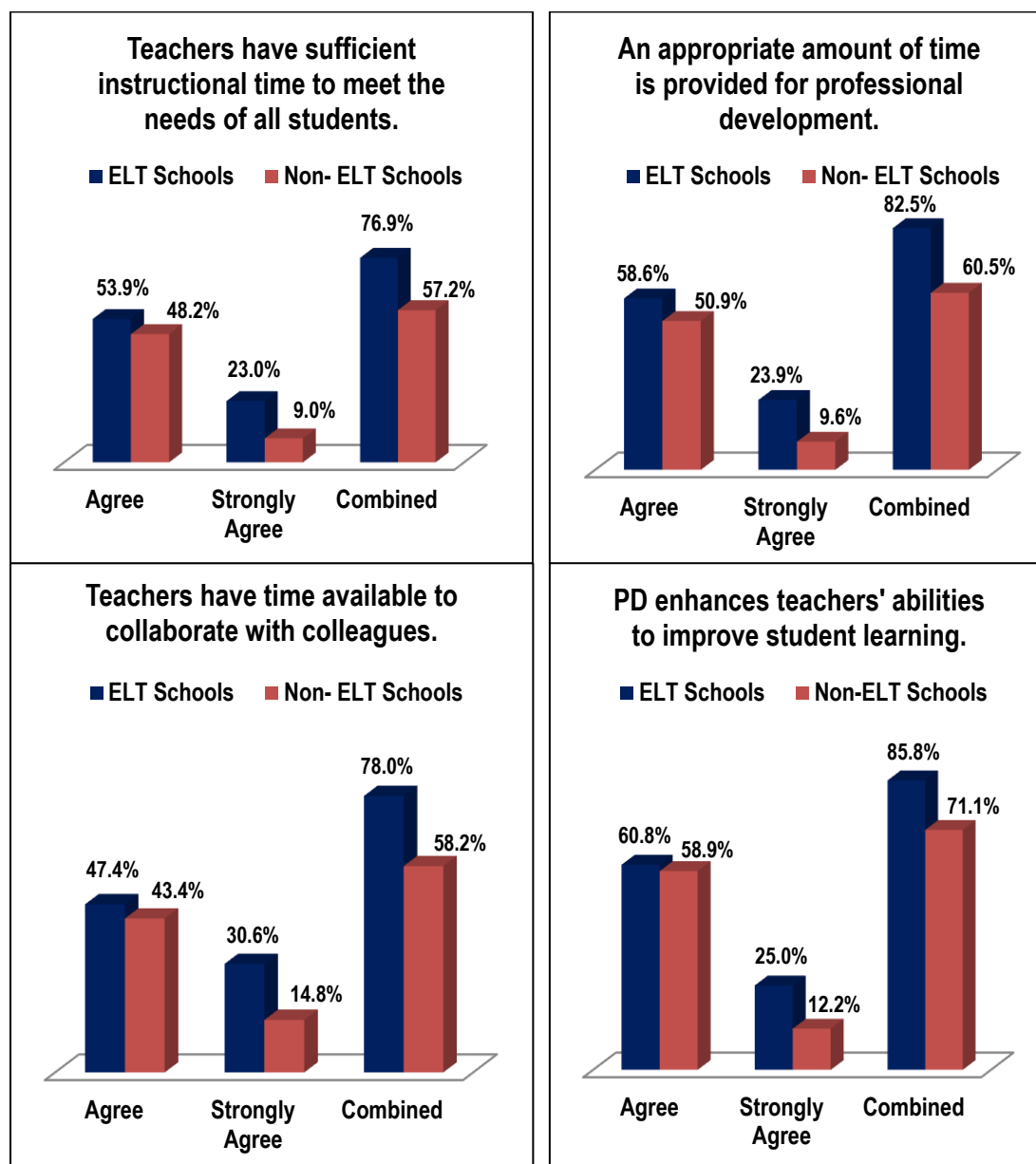
Establishing common reasons for higher turnover at MA ELT schools is beyond the scope of the evidence gathered for this report, especially given that ELT is often adopted by schools precisely because they face more complex challenges than other schools in their districts, and any or all of which may contribute to teachers leaving. The complexity and multiplicity of issues that might prompt attrition was confirmed anecdotally by focus group discussions with MA ELT teachers. In response to “Why do teachers leave your schools?,” focus group members indicated that many teachers left to manage family obligations, especially related to young children. Some schools reportedly experienced high numbers of retirements (which may be explained in part by the fact that retirement benefits are tied to salary earned closest to retirement, which can be significantly higher at ELT schools, therefore attracting teachers close to retirement age). Others reported that teachers left for neighboring districts with higher salaries (allowing these teachers to retain their higher salary while working fewer hours at a non-ELT school), and one teacher indicated that her ELT school was the only district school hiring new teachers, so was used as a stepping stone to other district schools. Furthermore, because focus groups were relatively small, this list is unlikely to be exhaustive.

That said, if managing young families is a recurring contributor to premature teacher departures, as reported, ELT district and school leadership may want to consider preemptive policies and practices that provide some flexibility in order to keep these teachers, especially because data shows that ELT school staffs are becoming younger over time (in school year 2008, 26.7 percent of teachers were 32 years old or younger, whereas by school year 2014, 35 percent of teachers were 32 years old or younger).²⁵ During conversations with leaders of expanded-time charter schools, which also tend to experience high levels of teacher attrition, several spoke of intentionally keeping teacher load manageable by limiting the number of classes teachers taught or keeping the student-teacher ratio low in recognition of the fatigue that may accompany longer hours.

Despite comparatively higher levels of turnover, MA ELT teachers reported satisfaction with the amount of professional time that expanded schedules afford, which was confirmed by data from a recent statewide teacher survey. TELL Massachusetts survey data shows high levels of agreement among ELT teachers to statements related to adequacy and use of professional time, absolutely and compared to their peers in non-ELT schools, especially in the “strongly agree” category. (Chart 9). Similarly, additional compensation paid to ELT teachers, at least among the current MA ELT compensation arrangements, does not seem a complete antidote to turnover. Districts with relatively high salary differentials for ELT teachers still experienced rates of turnover higher than district averages (i.e., Worcester and Fall River. *See*, Charts 6 and 8).

²⁵ ESE’s District Analysis and Review Tools (DART), configured for ELT schools by National Center on Time & Learning. Note: For purposes of this comparison, public schools statewide with at least 7.5 hour days or at least 190 school days per year were considered to be “ELT.”

Chart 9. SY13-14 TELL Massachusetts Teacher Survey Data Comparing ELT and Non-ELT Responses on Questions Related to Use of Teacher Time



Note: Only schools with more than 50 percent participation and 5 respondents are included in TELL Massachusetts data. ELT schools included in this chart are defined as all public schools statewide with at least a 7.5 hour school day or 190 school days per year.

Source: TELL Massachusetts SY2014 survey data, disaggregated by school and compiled by NCTL.

Based on heuristic evidence at least, there may be reasons for turnover at ELT schools that can be addressed by school and district leadership, and may ultimately allow a net recapture of resources.

Issue: Improving Teacher Retention May Reduce Consumption of School and District Resources.

Goal: Reduce unwanted teacher attrition at MA ELT schools.

Rationale: Substantial administrative and educator resources must be directed to onboarding and developing considerable numbers of new teachers every year, especially if new staff is also relatively inexperienced. In addition to the constant flow of resources to new personnel, the need to familiarize large numbers of the staff with the academic and cultural goals of the school every September makes a strongly integrated school culture less likely.

Options:

- Encourage schools and districts to assess their rates of voluntary teacher turnover to determine patterns in reasons for departure.
- Require retention planning as part of grant applications/reapplications in order to ensure the issue remains visible as a potential drain on grant/district resources and cost-effective policies are considered/negotiated.
- Encourage districts and schools implementing ELT to consider flexibility for teachers, such as:
 - increasing individual preparation time during the school day;
 - reducing teaching load (numbers of students and/or classes)
 - providing quality coverage to allow teachers to attend to family/personal obligations as necessary (through co-teaching, increased numbers of floating positions, etc.), or
 - opting for extending time through increased school days rather than longer hours (i.e., teaching during February vacation or adding to the traditional 180-day school year).

Planning

Intuitively, providing planning time, funding and technical assistance to schools attempting to maximize the addition of 30 percent more time to their school years makes enormous sense. Recent experience confirms intuition.

For example, the first cohort (Cohort 1) of the TIME Collaborative²⁶ schools in Massachusetts received Ford Foundation grants in FY13 to enable a year of structured planning for ELT.

²⁶ Funded in part by the Ford Foundation, the TIME Collaborative is a multi-year investment in the development of high-quality and sustainable expanded learning time (ELT) schools in five states: Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Tennessee by building capacity at school, district and agency levels. NCTL is the grant administrator for Massachusetts.

Notably, improvement was not limited to those Cohort I schools that implemented ELT following the planning year, but those that were not able to fully implement also saw gains. Further, a number of schools improved performance in key areas *over the course of their planning year*.

While, as may be expected in early stages of implementation, the picture is not universally rosy for new ELT schools, results from a variety of assessments show gains for students and in areas that are particularly targeted by the elements of ELT, such as core academics (many schools have chosen a literacy-based instructional focus), differentiation of instruction, data analysis and common planning time for teachers, and closing opportunity gaps through enrichment and project- and service-based learning.

Given the capacity-building opportunity that planning offers to all schools through re-examining, re-tooling, and re-committing to the best use of the school day for all students, even if full ELT is not feasible/attainable, an allocation of grant funds for planning appears a sound investment. Originally, the MA ELT grant program set aside funds for planning grants in amounts generally ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 per school (in FY08, the last year planning grants were offered). More recently, NCTL awarded TIME Collaborative districts \$25,000 - \$75,000, depending on the number of schools planning for ELT. At a rate of \$25,000 per school, Massachusetts could award planning grants to all FY14 Level 3 schools (289) for \$7.23 million or to schools falling within the lowest 10 percentiles for performance within their school type (155)²⁷ for \$3.88 million.²⁸ Providing requisite technical assistance to fortify planning will add to this sum, as private philanthropy may not be available for planning on this increased scale. However, to avoid disappointment in the event that new grant funds are not available for planning schools, rather than crafting planning grants as a precursor to grant-funded ELT, this grant should be characterized as a scheduling redesign opportunity that improves use of time with or without adding 300 hours.

Issue: Attempting to Add to or Change School Calendars is Best Accomplished with a Dedicated School Team, District Support, and Targeted Technical Assistance well in Advance of Desired Implementation.

Goal: Ensure low-performing schools are maximizing the use of current school calendars and thoroughly planning for implementation of additional time.

Rationale: Experience demonstrates that advance planning by a dedicated school leadership team (administration and educators) with targeted technical assistance is highly beneficial to schools newly implementing ELT. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that there is benefit in rethinking and redesigning school schedules even if

²⁷ “2014 Lists of Massachusetts Schools and Districts by Accountability and Assistance Level,” Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, last updated December 18, 2014 (for both Level 3 and lowest 10 percentile schools). <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/accountability/?section=2014>

²⁸ Because Level 4 and 5 schools are subject to intensive planning requirements associated with turnaround, planning grants for ELT are likely unnecessary for schools in these accountability levels.

substantial amounts of additional time cannot be added immediately, likely derived from the focus on design elements that advance core learning and school and professional culture, which are not exclusively dependent on additional time.

Options:

- Create and fund a school time redesign grant that maximizes current schedules as well as plans for ELT with a priority for Level 3 schools. Districts/schools will commit to designating a planning team, incorporating elements of high-quality ELT, and providing a school day of at least 7 hours (possible through creative use of existing resources, i.e., staggered schedules). Funding should cover school-centered costs as well as the costs of providing quality technical assistance and grant administration.

Partners

Partners, usually community based, have always been part of the ELT conversation as a vehicle for:

- Diverse enrichment opportunities for students (addressing the opportunity gap);
- Creating investment by and in the community;
- Releasing teachers from classroom obligations to engage in professional time; and,
- Providing an affordable alternative to teacher compensation for portions of the day and activities not requiring certified teachers.

In the course of our investigation, many schools reported that employing partners tended to be the most vulnerable pillar in their ELT infrastructure. Some schools' partnerships had been curtailed or eliminated entirely as funding was needed to address growing salary obligations. Others had eliminated ELT coordinator positions, leaving schools without a designated staff person with sufficient bandwidth to fully manage partners' integration into schools. Others reported difficulties with their partnerships due to inconsistency in partner personnel and variability in partners' classroom management skills, requiring teachers to staff partner time as well as core academics. Some districts, especially those distant from large urban centers, cited a shortage of appropriate partners as a reason for their inability to cultivate a variety of outside community partnerships. Finally, some mentioned difficulties in efficiently engaging partners long-term due to the state's procurement requirements for annual solicitation of bids. Those schools with long-term partners that had made a concerted effort to train and integrate them into the school community, however, reported many successful relationships.

We also recognized emergence of another type of school partner, particularly among some urban ELT schools. This partner prototype generally focuses on providing academic support as a central part of its organizational mission, is usually serving multiple schools, and assumes a role integral to the school's core academic function, as opposed to focusing solely on enrichment opportunities. Examples of these types of partners are City Year, Citizen Schools, and some education management operators like Blueprint, which has introduced ELT to a Boston school as part of its turnaround plan.

These “core” partners (a term used by Boston After School & Beyond in their study of partnerships in some of the Boston Public Schools for sophisticated, highly integrated partner organizations²⁹) are generally well versed in school operations and increase school capacity by providing additional instructional personnel in the form of tutors or “second-shift” educators. Because core partners are often able to leverage philanthropic resources and offer a ready-made model, they are an attractive option for schools, especially those with immediate needs for organizational reinforcement. However, they can be expensive, despite being subsidized by private funds, especially if these partners are used to free “first-shift” district teachers for professional time, in which case the district must pay the partner’s fees as well as their teacher salaries.

Issue: Effective partnerships are often difficult to establish and administer, especially with community-based organizations.

Goal: Encourage and support creation of strong partnerships at ELT schools.

Rationale: Partnerships can extend grant/district resources for ELT in both “sweat equity” and philanthropic support, in addition to strengthening relationships between students and their communities, offering diverse learning and enrichment opportunities, and widening the circle of caring adults present in students’ school day.

Options:

- Grant applicants should describe their plan for partnership facilitation: recruitment, integration and evaluation. The partnership plan should also designate resources adequate to cover reasonable costs associated with partner facilitation. For districts with more than one ELT school, shared partnership coordination should be encouraged.
- If more than 50 percent of the grant allotment will be paid to any single partner, the district should explain how the partnership will build organizational capacity.
- The Department should explore options for facilitating school-partner connections for ELT schools and districts through regional events, central information bases, and disseminating best practices.

²⁹ Boston After School & Beyond, “Advancing Qualitative Partnerships: Qualitative Review.” Presentation, Spring 2014.

Funding Structure

The Department and its ELT partners have reviewed and refined parameters for high-quality ELT design in the context of all of its programs that have expanded time, but have concluded that, even in the case of the most cost-effective models, ELT for district schools is not revenue-neutral. And while the MA ELT grant funding has provided and will continue to provide a valuable proving ground for various designs for adding learning time, it is not the most cost-effective option for meaningfully extending ELT's reach. To allow the benefit of ELT to promote educational parity among all of the Commonwealth's students requires a global commitment, such as including the cost of expanded time in Chapter 70's foundation budget.

Issue: Scaling ELT for all schools in need more efficiently accomplished through a stable funding source.

Goal: Provide an opportunity for all schools with high numbers of educationally vulnerable students to expand learning time by including funding for ELT in Chapter 70's foundation budget.

Rationale: As an annual grant, MA ELT has systematic shortcomings that hinder sustainability and scalability. The uncertainty of funding for new schools, as well as the timing of grant awards weeks before the school year, provide little opportunity or incentive for schools and districts to commit to the advance work integral to a strong early ELT program (investing stakeholders (especially teachers and parents), negotiating collective bargaining agreements, recruiting partners and organizing schedules). Furthermore, early compensation arrangements are often negotiated in haste and, without a required district contribution, are often defined artificially by the amount of the grant award. Given their intractability, these terms then become so expensive that districts find themselves eliminating other valuable aspects of ELT programming as their programs mature and the grant remains static. Finally, without either an inflation or cost of living adjustment, the per-pupil grant allotment does not promote parity among districts and has inherently diminished purchasing capacity over time.

Many of these drawbacks would be addressed by funding ELT through the foundation budget. However, because Chapter 70 does not generally provide accountability for state aid, there is some concern that the lessons learned through MA ELT will be lost unless the legislature were to adopt incentives for new ELT schools and districts to incorporate best practices and participate in technical assistance. Finally, even if some aspects of the grant's support and accountability matrix are retained, other elements, such as application and grant processing, could be streamlined or eliminated if funding were rolled into the existing Chapter 70 process.

Options:

- Create an ELT increment as part of the foundation budget targeted to schools and districts with high concentrations of low income elementary and/or middle school students.
- Create a "qualifying" step for districts seeking an ELT increment that requires

certain criteria as part of their ELT design (such as minimum number of additional hours, a grant-funded planning year and suitable plan, compensation arrangements negotiated in advance (preferably with a flat rate), plans for recruitment, training and evaluating partners, teacher retention measures, etc.).

Conclusion

After an intensive investigation of ELT models and practices among grant recipients, we acknowledge that much remarkable work has been done for students at these schools for the 10 percent additional funding per student provided through this grant. In an environment with many demands on schools, teachers, students, administrators, and districts to integrate new programs and assessments, ELT provides relief in the form of time – not only to ensure compliance, but to allow learning to flourish for the entire school community.

However, our mission was to investigate ELT’s sustainability, which we conclude is not reasonably feasible long-term for most districts with growing salaries and a static grant amount. Our hope, in part, is that this report will both facilitate external understanding of how much ELT costs and help the constituents in our ELT schools and districts understand more about the funding side of the equation, promoting a dialogue at the local level about preserving the most valuable aspects of additional time through inevitable tradeoffs and adjustments.

While the Department continues to see time as a vital ingredient for eliminating achievement gaps for many school models and programs, a truly systematic approach requires a stable, predictable funding commitment that reflects regional cost differences and inflation. Equally necessary, however, is adequate support and accountability to ensure time added consistently leads to desired outcomes.

Appendix A

Expanded Learning Time Expectations for Implementation

I. ELT Design is Driven by Focused School-wide Priorities

The school's ELT design (schedule, staff, instructional approaches, assessment systems, budget) is driven by no more than three school-wide priorities, including one school-wide instructional focus. These priorities drive instructional improvement and the use of time. Progress is monitored and evaluated by both the school and district using clear, measurable goals.

II. Data is Used to Drive Continuous Improvement and Strengthen Instruction

The design and implementation of ELT is based on a data-driven assessment of student needs to establish focused school-wide priorities. The school provides the time, structure and training for all staff to participate in frequent data cycles throughout the year.

III. Additional Time for Academics is Used for Core Instruction and Differentiated Support *The school allocates additional time to rigorous core instruction in ways that reflect student needs and are aligned to the current MA Curriculum Frameworks. The school also ensures that all student schedules include academic interventions or acceleration, based on student need.*

IV. Additional Time for Enrichment Is Used to Deepen Student Engagement in Learning

The school uses additional time to provide enrichment opportunities for all students which are aligned to the current MA Curriculum Frameworks and support school-wide priorities. Courses are based on student interests and choice, with opportunities for mastery.

V. Additional Time for Teacher Collaboration is Used to Strengthen Instruction and Improve Achievement

The school uses additional time to build professional learning and collaboration focused on strengthening data-informed instruction, aligned with the current MA Curriculum Frameworks and school-wide priorities.

VI. Additional Time is Used to Enhance School Culture

The school leverages time to build a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations for all students, and a culture of professionalism for all adults.

VII. School Leadership is Focused and Collaborative

The principal and Instructional Leadership team are fully committed to using additional time to accelerate student achievement and eliminate opportunity gaps. They engage all stakeholders in the process of ELT design and implementation in

support of school-wide priorities.

VIII. District Leadership Supports ELT

The district actively supports all ELT schools in meeting the ELT Expectations for Implementation. It provides leadership, oversight, supervision, strategic planning and creative problem solving to ensure schools can meet rigorous achievement goals and sustain ELT.